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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Coroners Inquests.

This journal has always expressed strong disapprobation of the culpable manner in which the holding of one of the most important procedures of the laws governing the British Empire is set at naught in this Province of Manitoba. But in a recent case a burlesque element has been added to the neglected function. A man was shot dead in the noonday, the shooting was witnessed by at least two people, the medical man who arrived on the spot shortly after the murder on cleansing the head from the mass of congealed blood, and mud, with which it was besmeared, found the entrance point of a bullet in the temple. The cause of death was evident. The Coroner was summoned to arrange as to the disposal of the body, a proceeding which the law calls for. There are two coroners in this city; the second one was sent for and it is presumed they, with the chief clerk in the Attorney-General's Department, decided that there was no necessity for an inquest, but incredible as it may appear, decided that a post-mortem to find out the cause of death was required, and, at the magisterial enquiry, which ought to have been a Coroner's inquest, the Coroner himself gave evidence to the effect that the apparent cause of death was from a wound in the head, the post mortem being held by the two coroners. The jury summoned on an inquest are the usual parties to ask for a post mortem examination, but in this case it is most

unlikely they would have done so. If then, it was decided, and most unquestionably wrongfully decided, in the case of this unprovoked murder, that an inquest was not necessary, how far less necessary was it to hold a post mortem examination. We were under the impression hitherto that the coroners of the Province have been over ruled by the Attorney-General's Department; but on referring to the Revised Statutes of Manitoba Chapter 32, Clause 4 says: "No fees shall be obtainable by any coroner unless prior to issuing his summons for a jury he states on oath, that there is reason for believing that the deceased did not come to his death from natural causes, or from mere accident, or mischance, but from violence, or unfair means, or culpable, or negligent conduct of others. It is therefore quite evident that this assumption of right on the part of an official in the Attorney-General's Department to decide whether an inquest is or is not necessary is one which in no way pertains to him, and a refusal on his part to pay the Coroner who holds an inquest under such circumstances as the clause referred to states would, when made public place the Department in a very unpleasant position, to use a mild expression.

What is the cause of Lynch Law prevailing in the States? The uncertainty that surrounds the guilty party being punished. It is to be deplored that the administration of justice in a part of the English Empire is fast tending to introduce a similar condition of things. People die violent deaths and are hur-